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BEFORE THE  
ILLINOIS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE  
WESTERN ILLINOIS

Hearing held, pursuant to notice, on the 16th  
day of April, 2021, between the hours of 6:00 p.m.  
and 7:00 p.m. via Zoom teleconference.

1 A P P E A R A N C E S

2 COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

3 Representative Jay Hoffman, Chairperson  
4 Representative Elizabeth Hernandez, Chairperson  
5 Representative Tim Butler, Republican Spokesperson  
6 Representative Avery Bourne, Member  
7 Representative Kelly Burke, Member  
8 Representative Theresa Mah, Member

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22 Representative Mike Halpin  
23 Representative Norine Hammond  
24 Representative Daniel Swanson

21  
22 Court Reporter  
23 Lydia Pinkawa, CSR  
24 Illinois CSR #084-002342  
Alaris Litigation Services  
711 North Eleventh Street  
St. Louis, Missouri 63101

1 CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: So the House committee on  
2 redistricting shall come to order. My name is Jay  
3 Hoffman. I'm the state representative from the 113th  
4 district and I am a member of the redistricting  
5 committee and will be chairing today's hearing.

6 I'd like to welcome several local  
7 representatives who have joined us today. I see,  
8 from our side of the aisle I see Representative Mike  
9 Halpin. I also see, not necessarily from the area,  
10 but Representative Theresa Mah. The chair of the  
11 redistricting committee has also joined us,  
12 Representative Lisa Hernandez, and Representative  
13 Kelly Burke. Also joining us from the Republican  
14 side is spokesperson, Representative Tim Butler,  
15 Representative Avery Bourne and I guess as a semi  
16 local area person, Representative Norine Hammond.

17 So with that, I'll have an introductory  
18 statement. If you guys, after the introductory  
19 statement, would like to, anyone would like to say  
20 something and make comments, that would be great.  
21 Obviously, anyone can ask questions of the witnesses  
22 as we go through the process. And then after my  
23 introductory statement, your comments, there will be  
24 a short presentation by our staff regarding the

1 redistricting process, which is mostly an educational  
2 process that I think is very informative.

3           So I'd like to thank everyone who's chosen  
4 to participate in today's hearing. Your insight and  
5 participation is as important as ever as we begin  
6 the redistricting process under unprecedented  
7 circumstances because of the COVID-19. The United  
8 States and the Illinois constitution require the  
9 general assembly to redraw political boundaries every  
10 ten years to account for population shifts. These  
11 hearings are part of the process.

12           House Democrats are dedicated to transparency  
13 and public participation in the redistricting  
14 process. While state law requires a minimum of four  
15 public hearings throughout the state, our committee  
16 intends and has held far more and present additional  
17 avenues for public participation. Our goal is to  
18 inform as many people as possible and to gain as much  
19 information as possible about the diverse communities  
20 of our state.

21           Our staffs have been making hundreds of phone  
22 calls to encourage participation in these hearings.  
23 Those who wish to participate should be given an  
24 opportunity, period. We're holding a series of

1 virtual and in person hearings throughout the state.  
2 Early last month we announced a schedule of 23  
3 hearings before proposing the redistricting plan. In  
4 comparison, in 2011 the House redistricting committee  
5 held 17 hearings in total.

6 While we are guided in this endeavor by the  
7 United States constitution, the Federal Voting Rights  
8 Act, the Illinois constitution and the Illinois  
9 Voting Rights Act, we are also interested in any  
10 relevant demographic information such as social,  
11 political, economic, religious or any other  
12 characteristics that are unique to your community.  
13 We want to hear your specific views on any social,  
14 political, economic or religious interests commonly  
15 held in your community, any specific interest groups  
16 that exist, any concerns you have regarding the  
17 current boundaries or alternatively, what works well  
18 about the current boundaries and suggestions for the  
19 drawing of new boundaries. In short, we want to hear  
20 any testimony that is relevant to the drawing of our  
21 new political boundaries and the redistricting  
22 process.

23 This year, for the first time, Illinois  
24 residents will be able to participate in the process

1 from the comfort of their own homes. This would  
2 include remote participation in these hearings and by  
3 drawing their own maps via a web site. The public  
4 drawing portal which is available is available under  
5 IllinoisHouseDemocrats.com, slash, Redistricting.  
6 That's the Illinois Dems, Illinois D-e-m-s dot-com,  
7 slash, Redistricting. This allows any Illinois  
8 resident to draw districts and share those maps with  
9 the committee for consideration.

10 The public may also submit written testimony  
11 or other public comment to the committee by e-mail at  
12 RedistrictingCommittee@HDS.ILGA.gov. That's  
13 RedistrictingCommittee@HDS.ILGA.gov. All written  
14 testimony, public comment and maps submitted to the  
15 committee will be made publicly available at the  
16 ILGA.gov and IllinoisDems.com, slash, Redistricting  
17 sites. Transcripts of the committee hearings will  
18 also be uploaded to those sites.

19 As for today, we begin with a short slide  
20 show presentation. First we will hear from the  
21 members of the general assembly who would like to  
22 make comments. And following the brief presentation,  
23 we have a number of witnesses who have indicated a  
24 desire to testify. If you have written testimony

1 prepared, we would ask that you submit the testimony  
2 to us and just briefly summarize it, briefly  
3 summarize it in your oral presentations. So I know  
4 that we have received several items and people have  
5 submitted written testimony. So if you have  
6 submitted written testimony, please indicate that you  
7 did that when you offer your oral testimony. And  
8 please do not read the written testimony but provide  
9 oral testimony.

10 With that, I believe that the local LIS  
11 representatives, the first would be Representative  
12 Mike Halpin, if you have any comments.

13 REPRESENTATIVE HALPIN: I do. Thank you. I  
14 thank the redistricting committee for offering to  
15 have this virtual hearing. We were blessed to have  
16 an in person hearing earlier this month. But  
17 unfortunately, it was on the busy Easter weekend and  
18 I think that may have prevented some folks from  
19 coming out that would have otherwise been there. So  
20 I just want to thank the committee again. This is a  
21 very important issue, particularly for residents in  
22 my district. It's something that I hear about often  
23 and I'm looking forward to having some of our local  
24 citizens provide some feedback to the committee as we

1 continue the process. So thank you all, members of  
2 the committee. I really appreciate it. And thank  
3 you to all my friends here that are from the 72nd  
4 district ready to give some testimony.

5 CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Thank you. Representative  
6 Hammond, do you have anything?

7 REPRESENTATIVE HAMMOND: Again, I would just say  
8 thank you to all of you for providing this  
9 opportunity. There are some good things that come of  
10 COVID and I think certainly this is one of those  
11 examples where we may not all be able to be together  
12 in a room, but having the ability to do it virtually  
13 is certainly something to be desired. And I would  
14 just say thank you for the work that you're doing.

15 And as for the community that I represent,  
16 while it's largely agricultural in nature, it  
17 certainly is home to four community colleges, Western  
18 Illinois University and a significant black and brown  
19 population, particularly in the Cass and Brown County  
20 areas. So thank you again.

21 CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Thank you, Representative.  
22 Leader Butler, would you have any opening comments?

23 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: I would and I've got a  
24 couple questions. But let me first say thank you,

1 Leader Hoffman and to the majority and Chairwoman  
2 Hernandez. I appreciate the fact that you heard my  
3 concerns that some significant areas of the state  
4 hadn't been represented in hearings yet and glad that  
5 we scheduled some for western Illinois, eastern  
6 Illinois, Kankakee and other areas of the state.

7 Certainly this area of the state in western  
8 Illinois is such a vital part of our state. You  
9 know, it's been tongue in cheek known as Forgottonia  
10 for a long time and, you know, for the reason that a  
11 lot of things, especially from an infrastructure  
12 perspective, get bypassed in the western part of the  
13 state. And it's home to a lot of great communities,  
14 from the Quad Cities down to Calhoun County and  
15 places like Galesburg and Carthage and Monmouth and  
16 Beardstown and Quincy, a lot of great communities as  
17 well as an important part of our state with its long  
18 length of the Mississippi River, which is an  
19 important part of our state as well when it comes to  
20 getting things to market as well. So I'm glad that  
21 we did this. The people of western Illinois  
22 certainly deserve a voice just like everybody else,  
23 so I appreciate the fact that we've done this, I have  
24 to say.

1           Jay, I did have a few questions for you, if  
2    you don't mind, just to follow up on some of the  
3    things that we've asked. We sent a letter, we gave a  
4    letter to Chair Hernandez earlier this week on  
5    Monday, I believe, requesting that the governor or  
6    someone from his staff testify at the East St. Louis  
7    hearing so we can find out what the governor's  
8    perspective is on redistricting. I don't know if  
9    we've got any response back. We asked the majority  
10   to reach out to the governor's office, so I don't  
11   know if you guys have heard anything back from the  
12   governor's office on that or not.

13           CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: I haven't heard anything  
14   back as of now.

15           REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Okay. The other thing is  
16   I'm in receipt of an e-mail that came from our staff  
17   that was forwarded from Syamala Krishnamsetty from  
18   Change Illinois. And it says hello, committee member  
19   who's been in contact with Change. Ben Orzeski has  
20   been having issues with the tool on the web site.  
21   I believe it's, the headline of the e-mail is  
22   requesting support for map drawing software. He sent  
23   an e-mail to staff this afternoon, but his e-mail  
24   bounced back. Would it be possible to reach out to

1 him?

2 I know folks have been told to go to the web  
3 site ILHouseDems web site to draw maps. And so if we  
4 could make sure that that's up and going so people  
5 who want to draw maps can draw maps. I know earlier  
6 in the week Chair Hernandez said no one had submitted  
7 maps yet. So if can check to make sure that's up and  
8 going.

9 And the last thing I would just ask, Jay,  
10 that we have, I see there's a handful of witnesses, I  
11 think three witnesses on the list here. So is it one  
12 panel tonight? Is that what we're looking at for  
13 this hearing?

14 CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: We were supposed -- we had  
15 two panels, but I believe that the members of the  
16 second panel have provided witness -- or written  
17 testimony. Therefore, I don't know that they will be  
18 appearing to provide oral testimony.

19 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Got you. So just one  
20 panel, okay.

21 CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Unless we're joined by  
22 others.

23 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: And so I would ask that if

1 you could have your staff forward that e-mail to  
2 ours, we'll get on it. And you can copy me in as  
3 well to make sure that that happens, okay?

4 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Yes, will do, absolutely.  
5 Thanks, Jay.

6 CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Okay. All right, I think  
7 that I saw Representative Swanson join us.  
8 Representative Swanson, you missed the brilliant  
9 introductions that I provided. But since you are  
10 here, would you like to add -- would you like to  
11 provide a statement?

12 REPRESENTATIVE SWANSON: Just as always,  
13 Chairman, I'm sure I missed some great words of  
14 wisdom and now I'll never know what those words were.

15 CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: They're on tape. They're  
16 recorded.

17 REPRESENTATIVE SWANSON: All right. It just  
18 won't be the same. But just to echo what was  
19 previously said by Representative Halpin and  
20 Representative Hammond, I appreciate the opportunity  
21 to participate in these types of hearings. And like  
22 Rep Halpin, I was, too, at the Rock Island hearing  
23 and unfortunately, it was a very small turn out. But  
24 I continue to encourage people, they're always asking

1 how do we get involved. So I continue to recommend  
2 to my constituents to jump on and be a part of the  
3 redistricting hearings. It's the simplest, most  
4 grass root effort to get on, especially with the wifi  
5 abilities here.

6 But thank you for all the hard work this  
7 redistricting committee is doing. Fortunately or  
8 unfortunately, I would not have thought that I'd be  
9 saying on the last Friday in March or April, whatever  
10 month we're in here, close to the end of the month,  
11 that I'd be at a senior night football game here in  
12 the local community. So here we are, April, honoring  
13 our seniors at a football game here. So with that,  
14 thank you to the committee and I'll be tuning in and  
15 listening throughout the evening here. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Thank you, Representative.  
17 And now our staff will provide a short presentation  
18 regarding the redistricting process. And then we  
19 will go to the witnesses. Marissa, right?

20 MS. JACKSON-DONNELL: Mm hmm. Hi. My name is  
21 Marissa Jackson-Donnell. I'm an employee of the  
22 Illinois House of Representatives and I'm here to  
23 give a brief overview of the state's redistricting  
24 procedure. I'll briefly discuss the background of

1 redistricting and the redistricting process in  
2 Illinois. I will also be going over federal and  
3 state redistricting requirements and guidelines.  
4 Finally, we'll be looking at what preliminary data  
5 reveals about population trends in the state and  
6 region.

7 Redistricting is the process that ensures all  
8 Illinois residents are afforded equal representation  
9 in the state legislature and federal Congress as  
10 guaranteed by the United States constitution. The  
11 U.S. Supreme Court held a series of rulings in the  
12 1960's that congressional and state legislative  
13 districts in each state must be of approximately  
14 equal population, establishing the principle of one  
15 person, one vote. As a result, states redraw their  
16 congressional and state districts every ten years to  
17 reflect changes in population.

18 The timeline for redrawing the legislative  
19 map is based on the Illinois constitution. The  
20 constitution gives the Illinois legislature the  
21 initial responsibility of passing the new legislative  
22 map, while the state House and state Senate must pass  
23 a plan with majority votes which then must be signed  
24 by the governor. If a new map does not go into

1 effect by the constitutional deadline of June 30th,  
2 responsibility for creating a new map passes from the  
3 legislature to a legislative redistricting  
4 commission. The commission would consist of eight  
5 members, with two each appointed by the legislative  
6 leaders and no more than four from the same political  
7 party. A majority vote of five or more commission  
8 members will constitute final approval of a new map.

9 However, if the commission does not agree to  
10 a map by September 1st, the Illinois Supreme Court  
11 will submit two names, one from each party, to the  
12 Illinois secretary of state, who will then choose one  
13 name at random to serve as the ninth member of the  
14 commission. Five of the nine members of the  
15 commission must agree to a plan no later than  
16 October 5th.

17 In order to understand the process of  
18 creating new districts, we must look at some legal  
19 guiding principles. First among these is equal  
20 population. Congressional districts must be nearly  
21 equal in population, while state districts must be  
22 substantially equal population.

23 Federal and state law also requires that all  
24 districts be contiguous, which means that all parts

1 of the district must be next to each other unless  
2 connected by water. Annexations and unincorporated  
3 areas and municipalities and counties sometimes \*mean  
4 communities are discontiguous. However,  
5 congressional and state districts must be adjacent or  
6 connected at all points.

7 A more difficult requirement to define is  
8 compactness. There are at least 30 different  
9 scientific ways to measure how compact a district is,  
10 but no statute or court precedent identifies standard  
11 criteria of compactness. In theory, compactness  
12 focuses on the shape of a district's boundaries, how  
13 spread out a district is from a central core or where  
14 the district's population center of gravity is. In  
15 practice, compactness is hindered by geography and on  
16 the ground realities, so often the interpretation of  
17 compactness involves more than a visual test.

18 Illinois is one of 14 states that nests its  
19 House districts, also called legislative districts --  
20 oh, excuse me -- also called representative districts  
21 inside its Senate districts, which are legislative  
22 districts. Map makers will also look, where  
23 possible, to follow existing political and  
24 geographical boundaries in ways that maximize the

1 community's opportunity to have its interests  
2 represented. As you know, however, county,  
3 municipality, township and natural geographic  
4 boundaries are not always compact or contiguous.

5 By studying population data and holding  
6 public hearings like this to listen to the thoughts  
7 of residents across the state, law makers look to  
8 identify what are known as communities of interest.  
9 A community of interest is a group of people  
10 concentrated in a geographic area who are socially,  
11 culturally, ethnically, economically, religiously or  
12 otherwise alike can be joined in a district to most  
13 effectively have their voices heard. The factors  
14 contributing to any particular community of interest  
15 will vary throughout the state.

16 Federal law requires redistricting plans to  
17 respect minority representation. The principles of  
18 the Federal Voting Rights Act are in place to prevent  
19 the reduction of opportunities for minority  
20 populations to participate equally in the electoral  
21 process. However, districts cannot be drawn solely  
22 on the basis of race.

23 Illinois law also protects representation of  
24 racial and language minority groups. The Illinois

1 Voting Rights Act helps to prevent minority  
2 fracturing or dividing a concentration of minorities  
3 among two or more districts by requiring map makers  
4 to consider creating crossover districts, coalition  
5 districts or influence districts.

6 A crossover district is one in which large  
7 minority groups may elect the candidate of its choice  
8 with help from voters of the majority group. A  
9 coalition district brings multiple racial or language  
10 minority groups together to elect a candidate of  
11 their choice. An influence district allows a group  
12 to influence an election outcome without being the  
13 majority population in the district. These state law  
14 requirements come into play only after compliance  
15 with federal law and U.S. and state constitutional  
16 requirements on redistricting.

17 In addition, the law ensures transparency and  
18 public participation by requiring public hearings  
19 across the state, one of which we are having here  
20 right now. At the end of the presentation, we will  
21 display an e-mail address on the screen which Chair  
22 Hoffman already provided where you can submit your  
23 ideas. The committee is also accepting written  
24 testimony today.

1           Now that we've covered the redistricting  
2 process, let's discuss what data shows about  
3 Illinois' population. The U.S. Census Bureau has  
4 delayed the release of much of the decennial census  
5 data by more than six months until this fall.  
6 However, the U.S. Census Bureau's annual population  
7 estimates show some trends that can help inform the  
8 work ahead.

9           The census 2019 population estimate shows an  
10 overall decline in state population over the past  
11 decade. However, there are large areas that project  
12 to have population gains. Communities with the  
13 largest by percentage increase since 2010 are  
14 Kendall, Monroe, Champaign and Kane counties.  
15 Demographically speaking, the state's white  
16 population is projected to decline, while  
17 African-American population statewide will likely see  
18 a smaller overall decline. Hispanic and Asian  
19 population across Illinois are projected to see  
20 growth.

21           Thank you very much for your attention and  
22 for coming out to share your thoughts today. As the  
23 Chair mentioned, you will be able to find testimony  
24 from this and other hearings on ILGA.gov and on

1 ILHouseDems.com, slash, Redistricting. The  
2 redistricting web site offers additional ways to  
3 engage with the process, including our public drawing  
4 portal where you can draw and submit your own  
5 district maps. You can send further written  
6 testimony and suggestions to the committee any time  
7 by e-mailing RedistrictingCommittee@HDS.ILGA.gov.  
8 Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Thank you very much,  
10 Marissa. Representative Butler, regarding the e-mail  
11 that you had received, it's my understanding that the  
12 staff has received the e-mail and is working on a  
13 response.

14 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Great. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: We will now go to  
16 witnesses. And our first panel will be three  
17 individuals: Bonnie Ballard, who is the president of  
18 the Rock Island County NAACP, Juanita Zertuche is the  
19 president of the League of United Latin American  
20 Council 5285. And David Geenen is the executive  
21 director, Doris and Victor Day Foundation.

22 I believe that you all have joined us and we  
23 would begin with Ms. Ballard. And we'll take  
24 testimony first and if there's any questions of the

1 witnesses, we'll go to questions. So Ms. Ballard,  
2 please proceed.

3 MS. BALLARD: Okay, thank you. Again, I'm Bonnie  
4 Ballard. I'm president of the Rock Island County  
5 NAACP. Thank you for the opportunity. This is my  
6 first time being involved in such. I am the newly  
7 elected president of the NAACP. So I'd like to reach  
8 out and thank my representative, Mike Halpin, for  
9 getting me involved with this.

10 As the NAACP legal defense and education fund  
11 has noted, redistricting will determine political  
12 representation for the decade to come. During the  
13 redistricting process, the lines and boundaries of  
14 government bodies are redrawn so that each district  
15 is roughly equal in population size based on the most  
16 recent census data.

17 However, it is almost as important that the  
18 districts are drawn in ways that comply with the  
19 central requirements of the Voting Rights Act and  
20 that new boundary lines do not dilute minority voting  
21 strength. Minority communities have an important  
22 role to play in the redistricting process to ensure  
23 that their voices are heard, their needs are  
24 addressed and their rights are protected.

1           The Rock Island County NAACP encourages the  
2 Illinois general assembly to keep in the forefront of  
3 this work the Voting Rights Act which, since 1965,  
4 has helped to protect minority voting rights.  
5 Special attention must be paid to the Voting Rights  
6 Act and its prohibition on redistricting plans that  
7 may discriminate. This discrimination most commonly  
8 happens when a redistricting plan concentrates  
9 minority communities into a smaller number of  
10 districts or spreads minorities out into too many  
11 districts. Both schemes weaken the political power  
12 of communities of color. So on behalf of the Rock  
13 Island County NAACP, I thank you for this  
14 opportunity.

15           CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Thank you. We will now  
16 move to the president of the League of United Latin  
17 American Citizens Council 5285, Juanita Zertuche.  
18 I'm not sure if that's the right pronunciation. I'm  
19 doing my best.

20           MS. ZERTUCHE: Thank you. It's close. It's  
21 Zertuche. So also, I want to thank you for the  
22 invitation. I want to thank Mr. Halpin as well for  
23 asking us to get involved. It is something that we  
24 have been working for. I've been involved with our

1 organization for the past six years, but I've also  
2 been in the community and involved in many other  
3 organizations. I was on the board for the Greater  
4 Quad Cities Hispanic chamber of commerce, I'm on the  
5 board for Mercado on Fifth and I volunteered, we've  
6 done a lot of work with other organizations. I've  
7 been fortunate to participate with some events with  
8 the NAACP as well.

9 And I think it's very, very important that  
10 the transparency that is happening with these  
11 meetings and this information is key. It's one of  
12 the things that I think makes us feel a little bit  
13 more at ease that we are going to be able to get  
14 information and to learn more. Because there are a  
15 lot of things that, you know, this is the first time  
16 that I have ever heard of this process or to have  
17 this much information. Usually we hear about this  
18 when it happens, so I look forward to continue  
19 getting the information. We've talked about this at  
20 our membership meeting with our council.

21 We volunteered to get, you know, I'm a  
22 registrar, so we did a lot of help with voting. We  
23 also helped with the census. So any opportunity that  
24 we get, we have been there. And this is another

1 opportunity that we want to be involved. We want to  
2 be at the table to help or, you know, learn more and  
3 to share the information with our community.

4 I also, you know, echo what you just heard,  
5 is that we want to make sure that everything is done,  
6 you know, the transparency is there, that everything  
7 is done to inform the community. And I think that  
8 that's the goal. I know for me and my own community,  
9 for the Hispanic community I know we have, our  
10 numbers have been growing. I see that with the  
11 involvement that I have with our New Life  
12 organization, with the Hispanic chamber of commerce,  
13 with, I worked at Black Hawk College for 22 years. I  
14 recently retired. So I know working with the college  
15 community, the high schools, that our population has  
16 been growing and our community is definitely strong  
17 and brings a lot to the Quad City area when it comes  
18 to the economic impact.

19 So we have a lot of organizations throughout  
20 the Rock Island County that are very much involved  
21 when it comes to the city of Silvis and East Moline  
22 and Moline and Rock Island. And I think we want to  
23 be at the table, we want our voices heard and we want  
24 to make sure that anything we can do to make sure

1 that the redistricting process is done, you know,  
2 with everybody being at the table I think will be  
3 something that we look forward to doing.

4 I have not submitted my written paper, but I  
5 will be doing that. So with that, that's really what  
6 I just want to share. I know our community has --  
7 our numbers are growing. I know we have a lot to  
8 bring to the table and I know we will continue to be  
9 growing and having a positive impact in the Quad City  
10 community. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Thank you. Thank you very  
12 much. And finally, for this panel, Mr. David Geenen.  
13 He's executive director of Doris and Victor Day  
14 Foundation. Mr. Geenen.

15 MR. GEENEN: Thank you. And thank you to  
16 communities of the redistricting committee and to  
17 Representative Halpin and everyone else for your  
18 welcome. I'm sitting here in Rock Island, Illinois.  
19 Behind me you see the logo of Bear Manufacturing.  
20 Bear Manufacturing was once the largest private  
21 employer here in Rock Island, founded by an uncle and  
22 a brother, Henry and Bill Damman. Doris and Victor  
23 went on to create the business and grow it here in  
24 Rock Island to the point where, at their passing,

1 having no children, they left it all here to make  
2 this community a better place. So the joy that I get  
3 to do here is to take the wealth that they built here  
4 in this community and reinvest it in the community so  
5 that this community can provide opportunities that  
6 were afforded to them.

7 Back in 2017 we got wind of this idea of  
8 there's the census coming out here in the community.  
9 So in addition to the state of Illinois and to the  
10 vote -- to the many of you that voted for this, the  
11 \$20 million or \$30 million the state committed to  
12 census outreach efforts compared to Iowa, who  
13 committed zero dollars to outreach, by the way, the  
14 Doris and Victor Day Foundation invested with other  
15 philanthropic partners around the state of Illinois  
16 to create a pool of \$2.1 million that was distributed  
17 around the state of Illinois, resulting here in the  
18 Quad Cities about \$50,000 in grants for nonprofits,  
19 all about bringing awareness to our community about  
20 the census. In addition to that, here at the  
21 foundation we hired an additional staff member with  
22 the title of census 2020 outreach director.

23 All we wanted here was a fair and accurate  
24 count. And we knew at this time there was a lot at

1 stake. There's a lot at risk here. We had COVID, we  
2 had this digital divide. We knew that for the first  
3 time, we were going to take the census digitally.  
4 And Representative Hammond, the rural communities for  
5 the first time, we were actually at risk of  
6 undercounting. We knew that we had an administration  
7 in Washington that was continuing to put mixed  
8 messages to our Hispanic communities about the issue  
9 of the citizenship question and they would want  
10 anything else to be in the news about challenging and  
11 court cases, about confusing our community about what  
12 really was at stake.

13 So we joined with our nonprofits and we knew  
14 that, we stood up and said we have one chance to do  
15 this right. We only have one chance to do it every  
16 ten years. We wanted to make sure that we would have  
17 our fair representation, our voice would be heard in  
18 Congress. We knew that Illinois might lose a seat,  
19 but now we were told we might lose two seats if we  
20 didn't get this right. We want to protect the  
21 hundreds of millions of dollars that we're entitled  
22 to. We actually partnered with a local college and  
23 had a study done of the 365 federal grants that you  
24 can tie to with the census. It was about \$1700 per

1 person in this community that would be missed out on  
2 if we didn't get it right.

3 We discovered in this whole process, as we  
4 went through our community and as we partnered with  
5 our nonprofits like Sister Bonnie from the NAACP and  
6 knocked on their doors and told people to stand up  
7 and get counted, that we are who we are when we're  
8 counted best and we can stand up and represent who we  
9 truly are. We've got to be counted. It was that  
10 simple for us as individuals to our civic duty just  
11 to be counted. And now we realize here that we're at  
12 the table with the redistricting.

13 So I'm not here to pat ourselves on the back  
14 and we invested so much money here in the community,  
15 but I come here today as a witness, not as someone  
16 who's reading a statement that is about  
17 redistricting, but someone who's been knocking on the  
18 doors knowing, in 2017, all of the census of getting  
19 it right leads us up to the most important part,  
20 which is redistricting.

21 So here at the community, when we look at our  
22 funding for the next ten years, we're also talking  
23 about what's going to set the tone that we discovered  
24 in the census. What's going to set the tone here in

1 Rock Island County for the next ten years? What's  
2 going to set the tone for who's going to represent us  
3 in Springfield and in Congress? Just as we, at the  
4 Day Foundation, supported a fair and accurate count,  
5 we're here today to voice our support that there will  
6 be a fair legislation map, one that will reflect  
7 Illinois' gender\* and racial diversity and without  
8 compromise at all to the preservation of the Voting  
9 Rights Act.

10           What we're here today asking is that locally,  
11 that it means preserving our collective community  
12 voices together. What we discovered in knocking on  
13 doors and getting people to engage and understanding  
14 what it means to be counted is that keeping  
15 communities' interests together, that's more  
16 important to us, that's more important to what we're  
17 hearing on the streets than the alternative, drawing  
18 boundaries and lines that will just weaken the  
19 collective voice, one that will proclaim us and  
20 attributes that will make us very unique. We sit  
21 there and talk about it every day. Don't separate  
22 us. Let us celebrate the diversity that we have by  
23 keeping our communities of interest together. Thank  
24 you.

1 CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Well, thank you,  
2 Mr. Geenen. Are there questions of this panel?  
3 Representative Butler.

4 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
5 And thank you to the witnesses for being here this  
6 evening. Just a few questions. And Mr. Geenen and  
7 Ms. Zertuche hit on it, so I know that they  
8 participated, obviously, in complete count efforts.

9 And so Ms. Ballard, did the NAACP, did they  
10 have a role to play? I think Mr. Geenen alluded to  
11 it, but did the NAACP assist with the complete count  
12 efforts in the census? You're on mute, sorry. A  
13 year and a half into Zoom and we still can't figure  
14 it all out. I know.

15 MS. BALLARD: It's my understanding that some  
16 members did participate.

17 MR. GEENEN: We relied heavily on the Rock Island  
18 County NAACP, but we also were able to secure,  
19 through Forefront, a \$30,000 grant for world relief  
20 in the Quad Cities. We actually had an outreach  
21 director that was working with Mercado on Fifth and  
22 with our local neighborhoods while also providing  
23 services and support to the Rock Island NAACP.

24 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Got you. And

1 Mr. Geenen -- is it Geenen? Is that correct?

2 MR. GEENEN: Yes.

3 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: And you had mentioned  
4 communities of interest and keeping your communities  
5 together. So when you say that, what do you think  
6 of?

7 MR. GEENEN: You know, we say this all the time  
8 about what we love about the Quad Cities is our  
9 diversity. And then what we know about the diversity  
10 is that our voices are better when we're collectively  
11 together. So I think that's what we hope, would be  
12 that voices joining together as a collective whole  
13 are better than separation.

14 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Which is great, but give  
15 me a visual representation of that on a legislative  
16 map.

17 MR. GEENEN: Well, I'm not sure what's being  
18 proposed. We were wanting to get a fair and accurate  
19 count and, you know, I haven't drawn the line.

20 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: And so just to confirm,  
21 Ms. Zeruche, you also, your organization also  
22 participated in the complete count efforts, is that  
23 correct?

24 MS. ZERTUCHE: Yes. And I was going to mention

1 that we had an event where we were working, it was  
2 the final push for the census and we had some  
3 volunteers that came from the NAACP. So we also got  
4 some support from the Hispanic chamber of commerce  
5 and Mercado on Fifth. So we collaborated as much as  
6 we could.

7 MR. GEENEN: You're raising a good point. We  
8 invested a lot in this community for a fair and  
9 accurate count, right? And where are we now? We're  
10 talking about redistricting, right? This is  
11 extremely important. COVID put a lot of steam, we  
12 put a lot of efforts in the complete count. We were  
13 organized and fit. You know, thank goodness we're  
14 having this Zoom tonight. So you're bringing up a  
15 very good point.

16 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Well, and this is my, you  
17 know, this is a point that we made and now I think  
18 this is the 22nd or 23rd hearing that I've  
19 participated in. And it is what it is on the census.  
20 We are not going to get the decennial census data,  
21 that granular data that you need to draw maps until  
22 at least August, if not September. And obviously,  
23 that runs into problems with our constitutional  
24 mandates that we have in Illinois. And so if maps

1 are drawn by the June 30 constitutional deadline for  
2 the legislature to act, that will not contain the  
3 data that you guys knocked on doors about. It won't.  
4 It will have American Community Survey data, it will  
5 have potentially other, maybe private firm data that  
6 may be used for it. I don't know what the plan is  
7 for the majority to draw the maps. And this is a  
8 concern.

9 So this has come up in hearing after hearing  
10 after hearing, that the data that potentially could  
11 be used, especially ACS, American Community Survey  
12 data can grossly under-represent minority communities  
13 as well as rural communities, which for this hearing  
14 is a huge deal. When you look at a community like  
15 Beardstown that Representative Hammond represents, it  
16 has a large minority population, a growing minority  
17 population the last two decades in a town that I've  
18 spent a lot of time in as well working on the  
19 congressional level. That could be wildly inaccurate  
20 when we draw the map, the representation of a town  
21 like Beardstown.

22 And this is our great concern, is that if we  
23 move forward using American Community Survey data,  
24 that the communities that you went to, that you look

1 out for and that you held hands and knocked doors and  
2 done all this stuff, they're not going to be  
3 accurately represented.

4 MR. GEENEN: No. And we knew that in 2010, the  
5 data was wrong. That's why we put all the money to  
6 get it right. And so absolutely, we were attempting  
7 to try to say in a nonpartisan way that we had an  
8 administration trying to get us to the point where  
9 we're using the wrong data when we get to  
10 redistricting, that everything kept on getting  
11 delayed and delayed to we're at the point where what  
12 data do we use when we redistrict.

13 So all the money that we've invested in the  
14 community to get the numbers right, which we actually  
15 have back to us already showing that we actually did  
16 increase our numbers here locally. Some of the  
17 hardest counted communities in the west in Rock  
18 Island, we had a better return this year than we did  
19 in 2010. We did well. But you're saying now we  
20 won't be able to use that data.

21 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Well, the data that is  
22 used to draw congressional maps should be, has always  
23 been used to draw, excuse me, congressional and  
24 legislative maps is the decennial census data, not

1 the American Community Survey data. And like I said,  
2 the ACS data has wild swings, percentage wild swings,  
3 and also it mostly gets used in aggregates of over  
4 several years. So you may be looking at the 2019  
5 survey, ACS survey, but it might be aggregated with  
6 data back to 2013 or 2014 or something like that.  
7 And as you know, these populations shift, can shift  
8 year to year. Maybe not so much --

9 MR. GEENEN: You said it.

10 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Certainly in the metro  
11 areas, it can. The other thing I would say, you made  
12 a point about being at the table. And this is, these  
13 hearings are great. I mean, these hearings have been  
14 great and it's been great to hear people, it's been  
15 great to travel the state. But it's one thing for  
16 you guys to be at these hearings. It's another thing  
17 to know who's going to be drawing the maps at the  
18 table. And I'll just tell you those maps are drawn  
19 behind closed doors at the capitol complex on a  
20 partisan level where certainly the two parties are  
21 not getting together and they're drawn on a partisan  
22 level.

23 And while yes, Ms. Ballard, I agree  
24 100 percent that we have to keep -- respect the VRA,

1 respect everything that there is, whether it's  
2 statute or law when it comes to respecting minority  
3 populations and minority rights. What doesn't get  
4 respected is dividing communities because of partisan  
5 purposes. And that's been on both sides, when  
6 Republicans have drawn the maps or when Democrats  
7 have drawn the maps.

8           And I've used the example time and time again  
9 of my own community here in Springfield, a town of  
10 115,000 people that's divided between three state  
11 House districts and three Senate districts. And it  
12 was done for partisan reasons to divide up the  
13 community. That's why. And that's what I get really  
14 concerned about, if folks aren't at, if you're not at  
15 the table while the maps are being drawn, and that's  
16 why we pushed for a commission and a more open  
17 process than the legislators drawing the map, that  
18 everything you have to say here tonight, which is  
19 good stuff, I don't know if it's going to be  
20 respected if we're drawing maps behind closed doors.  
21 So anyway -- go ahead, Ms. Ballard.

22           MS. BALLARD: What's the solution, then? You  
23 mean to tell me that Republicans and Democrats can't  
24 come to an agreement to serve the total community?

1 There's something wrong with that picture, right?

2 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Yes, and that's why we  
3 have pushed for permission to draw the maps.

4 CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Representative Butler.

5 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Go ahead.

6 CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Ms. Ballard, please  
7 restate. This happens on Zoom. Could you just  
8 restate your question? And then we'll get an answer.

9 MS. BALLARD: I have a problem with people saying  
10 that they can't get along, you know, they can't  
11 agree. I mean, I always say, you know, I've probably  
12 been around longer than any of you, okay --

13 CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: I'm right there with you.

14 MS. BALLARD: I don't think so. But if there's a  
15 problem, there's always a solution. So what I am  
16 hearing you say, that the Democrats and the  
17 Republicans can't meet in the middle, that they'd  
18 rather, I guess, not -- you're in office to take care  
19 of the people. Whether you're a Democrat or  
20 Republican, you're in there to serve us. And so  
21 you're going to tell me, because of the partisan  
22 stuff, that that takes over, that goes beyond serving  
23 us, the people.

24 So you know, I see a great issue here. And

1 maybe I need to go -- I'm a new NAACP president, but  
2 it seems like we need to do more than what I'm  
3 hearing now, hearing tonight. Because I can't go  
4 along with that.

5 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Well, let me respond.  
6 I will say that you are exactly correct. We get  
7 elected into these positions to get along,  
8 absolutely. And Representative Severin just joined  
9 us there as well from Fenton. I agree with you  
10 100 percent. And if you ask Leader Hoffman, he and I  
11 get along great and we work together on a wide  
12 variety of issues. We spent a lot of time together  
13 two years ago negotiating a very complex and large  
14 capital bill in the state of Illinois that was a  
15 bipartisan effort. We had, I don't know, Jay, how  
16 many bills did we put on the calendar today? 50  
17 some? We had 50 bills that went out, 50 plus bills  
18 that went out today on a consent calendar that  
19 everybody in the House voted for.

20 But what I will say on this, and I agree with  
21 you 100 percent, we should work together on these  
22 things. But it doesn't happen. And it doesn't  
23 happen because drawing of the lines is where  
24 political power comes from. And it gets down to the

1 base instincts, unfortunately, of legislatures. And  
2 whether it's Republican or Democrat, I don't care who  
3 it is, they don't come up with a bipartisan map.

4 And so what we have proposed for many years  
5 is a nonpartisan, citizen led commission to draw the  
6 districts for the legislature and Congress. And that  
7 was supposed -- that should have been on the ballot,  
8 your ballot, everybody's ballot in Illinois in 2016.  
9 It was kicked off by one vote by Illinois Supreme  
10 Court in 2016 or else we would have been using a  
11 commission to draw the maps this year.

12 We have legislation, I have introduced  
13 legislation to use a commission to draw the maps.  
14 And I'm with you. I think we should work together on  
15 this. I hundred percent agree, hundred percent agree  
16 with you. But it doesn't happen, unfortunately. It  
17 doesn't happen on the state house level, it doesn't  
18 happen at the local level, it doesn't happen on the  
19 congressional level. It's politics at its worst.

20 And on top of that, we have this issue with  
21 the data, so we're going to have a partisanly drawn  
22 map with data that's not good. That's what's going  
23 to happen this year and that's what I'm really  
24 concerned about. Because I don't think your

1 community is going to be represented correctly, I  
2 don't think my community is going to be represented  
3 correctly and we're going to be stuck with the map  
4 for ten years.

5 MR. GEENEN: In my community that worked really  
6 hard with a lot of money invested in it to get the  
7 numbers right, and now that we're fighting on two  
8 different levels, you know. We had one chance to get  
9 it right for the next ten years. It was more than  
10 just resetting funding. It was for us to have a  
11 fairly represented community, with policies and  
12 resources that relate from issues to education to  
13 development to infrastructure to the environment.  
14 That was resting upon having the right numbers in  
15 2020.

16 MS. ZERTUCHE: I have a question.

17 CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Okay, we're going to take  
18 one more question.

19 MS. ZERTUCHE: I just want to say what would be  
20 -- I'm kind of hearing what you're saying is really,  
21 first of all, I wanted to see if it would be possible  
22 to wait to get the data. Because I heard initially  
23 that it could be that it was just going to delay  
24 other things to fall in place, to actually get the

1 real data that came from the census. Because my  
2 thing is what you're saying is, what I feel is we  
3 also helped to get people to do the census. And our  
4 word, you know, what we were telling our community  
5 and people is that the reason you're doing it is  
6 because it's going to be counted, it's going to help  
7 the schools, it's going to help the community. And  
8 what you're saying is it's not going to be used. So  
9 in essence, I feel like our word was really not  
10 valid. I mean, I feel like --

11 MR. GEENEN: And I don't mean to interrupt. We  
12 were doing this for you all, we were telling the  
13 community we were doing this for you all, for  
14 redistricting. And we invested a lot in this  
15 community. And like she was saying, we had the  
16 League of Women Voters out there after school, having  
17 high schoolers, teaching them why the census is  
18 important, why does it matter to count. People were,  
19 even during COVID we were trying to figure out how to  
20 spend money. Now you're saying all of that, if I go  
21 back to the community and tell them, oh, by the way,  
22 they're not even going to use that data, so I would  
23 like actually for you to do that. Because we were  
24 doing this for you, we were doing this in partnership

1 with the state. We had state money to do this here.

2 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Yes, \$30 million.

3 MR. GEENEN: So what would you like to do with  
4 all the work that we did for you, then? This is the  
5 final --

6 CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Can I, just real quick? So  
7 thank you for your testimony. Let me just tell you,  
8 say this. Under the Illinois constitution, the  
9 Illinois general assembly has an obligation to draw  
10 redistricting, it's actually Article 4, Section 3 of  
11 the Illinois constitution, and the general assembly  
12 has the obligation to draw them. There are dates,  
13 there are certain dates that must be met.

14 So the debate that you are hearing is between  
15 utilizing census data that would come way later in  
16 the process, which essentially could result in the  
17 determination of who draws the maps by picking a  
18 Republican or a Democrat's name out of President  
19 Lincoln's, well, a fake President Lincoln's hat. And  
20 that has been done two, I believe two out of the last  
21 three times that we have drawn the maps. The  
22 question comes down to the American Community Survey  
23 data, which is called ACS, and whether that is  
24 accurate -- as accurate and meets the constitutional

1 muster that we can utilize that data in order to draw  
2 the maps. That's as simple as it can get.

3 And so we believe, our side of the aisle  
4 believes that it is accurate. And it's not like  
5 we've done these things like 20 years ago when there  
6 wasn't always data available, reliable data available  
7 is because of the work that you did.

8 So I would just say this. As we move  
9 forward, we're going to keep your thoughts in mind.  
10 And as we move forward, we're going to keep  
11 Representative Butler and the Republicans' thoughts  
12 in mind. And as we meet our constitutional mandate  
13 which we took an oath to abide by, and that means we  
14 have an obligation under Article 4, Section 3, the  
15 general assembly has to go and draw a map and has to  
16 try and do that.

17 We didn't run the census. That was run by  
18 the federal government. And we all know how that was  
19 run, right? And it sure isn't your fault, I  
20 guarantee you that, for all the work that you have  
21 done. That doesn't mean that the work you have done  
22 is not being made part and parcel of all the other  
23 community determinations of population and assistance  
24 and everything else. It just means that right now

1 under our constitutional mandate, we have an  
2 obligation and the question becomes is the American  
3 Community Survey data, ACS data accurate, and we  
4 believe it is constitutionally accurate.

5 So having said that, I appreciate everybody  
6 and I appreciate all of the community getting  
7 involved. I know that Representative Halpin, I thank  
8 you. I thank you Representative Hammond. I  
9 appreciate Representative Swanson for hosting us.  
10 And the House committee on redistricting shall stand  
11 adjourned to the call of the Chair. And it was great  
12 spending a Friday night with you guys. Have a good  
13 evening.

14 \* \* \*

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1 STATE OF ILLINOIS )  
 ) SS.  
2 CITY OF SPRINGFIELD )

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4 I, LYDIA B. PINKAWA, a Certified Shorthand  
5 Reporter, do hereby certify that the meeting  
6 aforementioned was held at the time previously  
7 described.

8

9 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my  
10 hand and seal.

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